

## Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of George Thornton S7709

f48VA

Transcribed by Will Graves

12/9/11

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading fails to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1786." Please call errors or omissions to my attention.]

[Note: the handwriting of the scribe of this application and most of the attachments to it is absolutely abominable and a great challenge to decipher. Use the ensuing transcription with great circumspection.]

State of Virginia Greene County SS

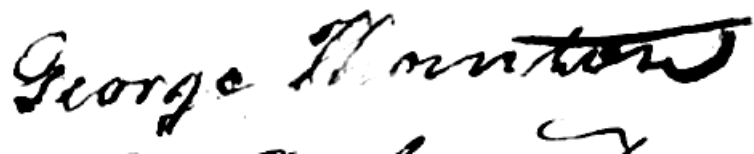
On this 13th day of June 1845 personally appeared in open Court before the Court of said County now sitting Mr. George Thornton a resident of the said County and State aforesaid aged ninety-three years next November who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by an act of Congress passed June 7th 1832. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated amounting altogether to fourteen months service in the Revolutionary War; that during all of his said Revolutionary services he was a resident in the County of Caroline Virginia adjoining Spotsylvania County; that he was a militia private for twelve months out of the above fourteen months and the remaining two months was in the regular service: that in the month of [indecipherable<sup>1</sup>] 1775 a call for men was made in his County by his brother Captain Anthony Thornton for a three months tour of duty; that in the said Anthony Thornton's Company he was drafted and one William Buckner a neighbor to him was the Lieutenant of that company; that all hands being ready were marched to the Lower Country and stationed near Williamsburg then capitol of Virginia and was head quarters for the State militia that his Company in together with several other County Companies after remaining near Williamsburg for something like six weeks were ordered to the capitol itself, whither all parties went in expectation of the enemy, that his company remained in the Williamsburg till the expiration of the period of enlistment being three months and the enemy failing to make their appearance all hands were discharged and that he returned home as well as he now remembers the 12th or 15th of September 75 six or seven days over his time; that on his way down to the Lower Country he passed through Louisa, Hanover & Prince George Counties; that he received from said service a written discharge given him by the oldest officer in company and command from Caroline County, whose name he cannot now call owing to the great length of time since elapsed since service; that not supposing his "discharge" would be of future account to him he took no special care of it and has not seen them for many years; that during said tour of three months his company were not associated with any portion of the regular Army and therefore cannot name any of their officers; that after serving said tour of three months he remained at home till the month of July 1776 when another call for men was again made by the above named

Captain Anthony Thornton under whom he again entered as a private and served a tour of three months in the lower Country near Williamsburg and a part of the time were even stationed at that place in company with other forces from Lower Virginia, that among the officers whom he knew from a distance was one Captain War [Robert Ware?] of Orange County Virginia; that said tour of three months was performed by guarding the Country below and about Williamsburg in the expectation of British invasion as was thought they proposed by stratagem to approach unseen and destroy the capitol at Williamsburg as also the towns of James River & the adjacent Country; that during this tour as before his company was not attached with any portion of the regular Army; that commanding officers were such as were the oldest officers and they commanded their respective Companies; that in marching to Williamsburg his company passed over nearly the same ground that they crossed in marching the first time to the lower Country – that during said tour his company was marched to Norfolk to guard that place from the enemy, that his company remained at Norfolk for four weeks and the time for which it had been called out having expired all hands were discharged and he said Thornton came home in October '76 day of the month he cannot state; that he remained at home after that tour till the month of May 1778 he thinks when he again entered the militia and served a tour of three months under Captain William Buckner as before said his neighbor who had been Lieutenant under his brother Anthony during the two preceding tours of his service; but who had then been promoted to his brother's Anthony's station as Captain; that said company was called out to counteract the movements of the British then on the Potomac [River] North of Caroline County where they had been pillaging and burning a number of houses belonging to the Americans; that his company marched up the Potomac to Westmoreland County and remembers very well many houses belonging to a Mr. Brent were burnt by the enemy and that his Company arrived at the scene of action too late to quench the flames; that having done all the mischief in their power they descended the Potomac and that his Company pursued them on land with the belief they would land at another point below – and when his company reached "Port Royal" a village in Caroline County news arrived that in descending the River the British man of war "Roe Buck" [Roebuck] had struck a sandbar and might be easily captured; that all hands immediately put out for the [indecipherable word<sup>2</sup>] and just as they reached the Banks of the River the vessel hoisted her flags and "break [?] off." That this circumstance is impressed on his mind because he was one of the company and that the trip was performed in a short time – the distance was 20 miles to the "Roe Buck" and the soldiers traveled it in two hours; that finding the enemy still proposed invasion his company in company with others pursued them the British to the Bay and ascertaining that they had gone off and our time of service having expired ten or twelve days before we were discharged from that tour. That from this tour he likewise received a written discharge from his commanding officer whose name he thinks was James Thom the oldest officer from his County: That he passed over or through the following Counties during said tour under Buckner as well as he now recollects, but that he does not now know who his Lieutenant was during said tour; that he thinks it was one Stephen Martin of which he cannot say positively; that his discharge from that third tour he has not seen for many years past and does not believe it can be found for that no care was ever taken of any of them; that the following are the Counties which his company passed through during said third tour to wit: King William, New Kent, Charles City, James City, King & Queen &c. That after this tour he returned home where he remained till the year of 1779 the month of

September when another call for men was made and he again entered the service for three months under his said Captain William Buckner under whom he served his last preceding tour, and that one Henry May was Lieutenant under Buckner during that tour which he remembers because May [indecipherable word] his first Cousin; that this call was made by the Governor and the militia were ordered to "head quarters" at Williamsburg whether his company went and were stationed at that place for 8 weeks then his company and several others were transferred to "Camp Holley" near Richmond Virginia where they remained till the remaining month expired and the men were all discharged and he came home and never again joined the Army till the Spring of 1781 he joined the regulars and was second Lieutenant in Colonel Thornton's Company that in rank he served about two months and was dismissed as the commander Colonel Matthews or Mathis who said the office of second Lieutenant had been abolished that I received a written discharge and came home; that at the time of joining the regulars he learned forces were collecting to meet Cornwallis then approaching or in Virginia – that Marquis Lafayette and General Wayne were likewise in the neighborhood all preparing for Wallis' Army – that Lafayette's troops were there, he does not know that the General himself was there in person, that many circumstances connected with his service could be mentioned but he thinks it unnecessary as the reasons for his delay are in not sooner applying are set forth and herewith annexed: That his last tour in the militia was as above under Captain William Buckner, and that for his said four tours of three months each in the militia he claims a pension; that he has no documentary evidence in support of his claim nor does he know of any living witness at this time by whom he can positively prove the above services either in the militia or in the regular Army; that for many years past his neighbors and friends have from time to time repeatedly urged him to apply for a pension which at one time he thought he would not do because he had [to indecipherable words] sufficient property for the balance of his days – and again he was not certain in his mind that he could draw for service in the militia supposing that those in the regular service were the soldiers Congress gave a pension unto and not being absolutely certain that as a militia man his claim would be allowed had been the sole reasons of his delay: but being recently informed that his claims certainly was a good one and having in the decline of life as is [indecipherable word], distributed his property among his children for their advancement being unable in his old age to manage it himself, he feels himself compelled to receive whatever amount may be coming to him for his said revolutionary services to add to his comfort and relieve his want. That in addition he well remembers all the money he ever received for his services aforesaid was £21.6.D paid him whilst in the war.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and declares that his name is not on the Pension roll of the Agency of any State whatsoever. Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

S/ George Thornton

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "George Thornton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

[Benjamin Creel, a clergyman, and Tandy Collins gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

[f p. 15]

Had a Court held for the County of Greene and State of Virginia on the 14th day of June 1845 the following questions and answers were received by said Court and ordered to be certified to

the War Department at Washington City: The same being proven under oath by George Thornton of said County upon his application for a Pension under the Act of June seventh 1832

1<sup>st</sup> Where and in what year were you born?

Answer I was born in Caroline County Virginia on the 18th day of November 1752 at a place in said County called "Guineus Bridges" [Guinea's Bridge] now called "Guenius Depot" [Guinea's Depot].

2<sup>nd</sup> Have you any record of your age and if so where is it?

Answer Yes I have a record of my age and it is herewith enclosed having been taken many years ago from my old family Bible which I then gave to my daughter Lucy B. Smoot then about going to Kentucky where she now lives.

3<sup>rd</sup> Where were you living when called into service: where have you lived since the Revolutionary War and where do you now live?

Answer. At the time of all my services in the revolutionary war I was a resident of Caroline County Virginia I came to the County of Orange where I now live in the spring of 1782 and have been ever since that time lived on the farm I now live on being in Greene County formally Orange

4<sup>th</sup> How were you called into service; were you drafted; did you volunteer or were you a substitute, and if in substitute, for whom?

Answer. I was a drafted soldier – I was never a substitute for anyone.

5<sup>th</sup> State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops when you served, such Continental and militia regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your service. Answer. I was never associated with any portion of the regulars till I joined the regular Army in the year 1781 as before said; I then served but a short time only in consequence of the order from the Commanding Colonel that the office of second Lieutenant should be abolished in with a good many others were accordingly discharged from service and I never again joined the Army. I remember that Colonel Mathews the then commander of us besought one Captain [indecipherable name] to resign that Daniel Coleman a favorite of the Colonel's might fill his place that he remembers [same indecipherable name] refused at which Colonel Mathews became greatly enraged and I heard him threaten to [indecipherable word] [indecipherable same name] of his commission. This service in this regular Army was as near as I can remember two months. As before said during my militia tours for which I claim a pension my troops were not during the whole time connected or in any company with any portion of the regulars – that regulars however would frequently pass from South to North Virginia of which I [indecipherable word or words]. Does I also well remember that all the compensation I ever received for my Revolutionary service was S21 & 6D paid made by my brother the aforesaid Anthony Thornton during my two months service with the regulars – he asked think was paymaster at that time and gave made the above sum of 21S & 6D During my militia service I spent my own money which mounted men put together to the sum of \$76.1-S or thereabout. And the circumstances I think any of my neighbors can testify to full I have spoken of it [indecipherable word] for the past 60 years and more.

6<sup>th</sup> Did you ever receive a discharge from the service, and if so, by whom was it given and what has become of it?

Answer. I received a written discharge at the end of each tour in the militia and they were given to me by the oldest officer from my County in service all of whose names I do not remember. The rule was the oldest officer from the several Counties should whilst in service commanded the man from his County. I also received a discharge from the two months in the regular Army

and not dreaming [?] this would avail me anything took no care of them. I suppose it would be a mere chance for any soldier to find at this remote day his discharges without having [indecipherable word or words] & filed it away – which I would have done I considered it [indecipherable word].

7<sup>th</sup> State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood and who can testify as to your character for veracity and their belief in your services as a soldier in the revolution.

Answer. Having lived in my present House for the last 60 years and having also raised a large family of whites and blacks suppose my neighbors are well acquainted with me – my nearest neighbors who can testify to my veracity or [indecipherable words] I have known him ever since 1780 and who now enjoying my plantation [several indecipherable words] – they are Tandy Collins who remembers when I first settled in this County; Daniel Miller, Richard White a revolutionary soldier and also George Sheaman and William [indecipherable last name] [indecipherable word] old Revolutioners – Captain Thomas Davis representative from this and the Orange County and many others whose names might be mentioned – all of whom if desired will furnish evidence of my character and of my service by tradition.

I further [indecipherable word] as the cause of my delay in not asking for a pension till this late hour, that I concluded at one time never to apply having as I thought enough property or my own use, but recently in the endeavor to promote the welfare of my children [indecipherable word] my property to them for their benefit being too old and infirm to manage myself; that I now find myself in straitened circumstances and therefore would upon reflection like to get whatever amount may be coming to me on account of said services – that my neighbors for [indecipherable word or words] frequently told me I ought to apply which I refused to do on all occasions till [indecipherable word] the circumstances I [indecipherable word] induced me to alter my determination.

S/ George Thornton.

Virginia Greene County to wit:

This day personally appeared before me in my said County Anthony Thornton himself a Justice of the Peace for said County and likewise son of George Thornton Esquire and made oath in due form of law that the annexed document containing the births and deaths of his father's family was taken many years ago from the old family Bible belonging to his father which was presented by his said father to his sister Lucy B. Smoot then immigrating to the State of Kentucky; that absent said transcript was made the same has been in his possession until the present time and is the only record he has had of the events of his father's family since the same was copied by him as aforesaid.

S/ George Thornton

[f p. 4: family record:

George Thornton born the 18th of November 1752

Margaret Thornton 20th of June 1758

Married 9th January 1774

C. T. Thornton born the 18th of August 1775

Ann Thornton 25th of December 1776

Peter Thornton 5 March 1779

Mary P Thornton 30 September 1781

C. Thornton 12 December 1783

G & Lucy B. Thornton 3 March 1786

Z. S. Thornton 14 February 1788

A. Thornton 14 October 1790 [last digit unclear]

John Thornton 31 October 1792

Wm Thornton 30 August 1795

Mary P. Kertley departed this life September 1822

Margaret Thornton Do Do Do 29th January 1823 aged 66 years

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$40 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831, for service as a private for one-year in the Virginia Continental line.]